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NARRATIVE
OF
A SHIPWRECK
OFF THE COAST OF NORTH AMERICA,

IN THE WINTER OF 1814.

BY
LIEUTENANT W. A. FERRAR, R.N.

Third Edition.

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A THIRD EDITION of this NARRATIVE has been reprinted, at
the request of numerous acquaintances.

31, TOWER STATION, WINCHELSEA, SUSSEX,
January, 1858.

TO THE RIGHT HON.

FREDERICK WILLIAM LORD AYLMER, K.C.B., K.S.F.,

ADMIRAL OF THE WHITE SQUADRON,

ETC., ETC., ETC.,

THIS NARRATIVE IS DEDICATED,

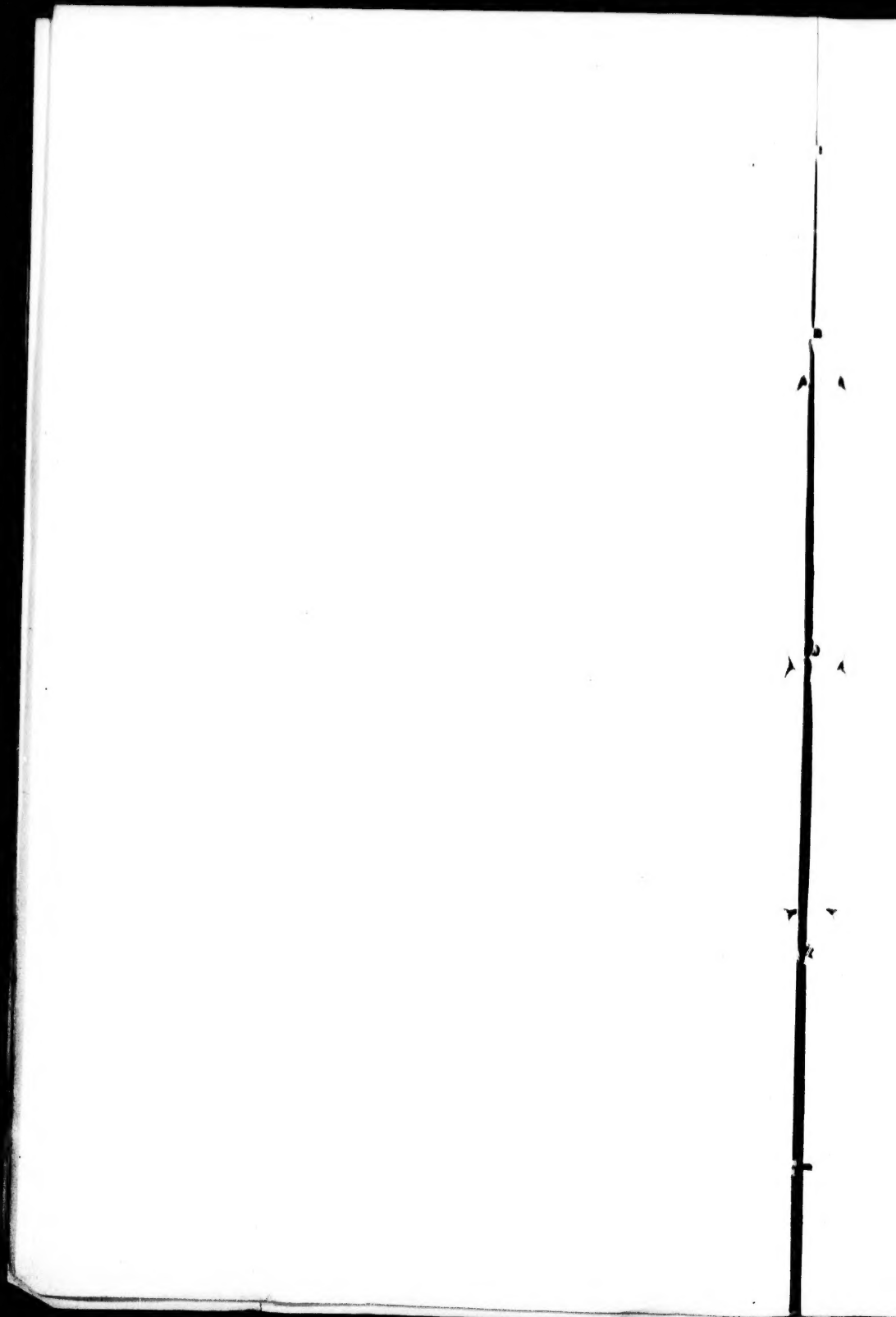
WITH THE DEEPEST FEELINGS OF ATTACHMENT AND ESTEEM,

BY

HIS FAITHFUL HUMBLE SERVANT,

WILLIAM AUGUSTUS FERRAR,

LIEUT., R.N.



A N A R R A T I V E,

&c., &c.

"Ah ! total night and horror here preside—
My stunn'd ear tingles to the whizzing tide ;
It is their funeral knell, and, gliding near,
Methinks the phantoms of the dead appear."

Falconer's Shipwreck.

HIS Majesty's frigate *Pactolus*, in which I was then a midshipman, Captain the Honourable Frederick William Aylmer, one of Rear Admiral Sir H. Hotham's squadron, blockading the port of New London and Long Island Sound, during the late American war, was detached to cruise off the river Delaware, in October, 1814 ; and on the 9th December, in latitude 35 deg. 34 min. N., longitude 70 deg. 4 min. W., at noon, captured the American schooner *Postboy*, 80 tons burthen, of Boston, bound to Charleston, South Carolina.

I was immediately sent on board the prize, with six seamen, and one of the Americans belonging to the vessel, and was ordered by Capt. Aylmer to proceed direct to Bermuda, then bearing S.E. by E., distant 340 miles. I was to be assisted

by the advice of Charles Paxton, one of the most experienced men belonging to the Pactolus, and formerly master of a trading schooner; but the navigation and charge of the Post-boy were to be entirely in my hands. At half-past one P.M. I parted company from the frigate and proceeded on my voyage with a strong N.W. wind.

On examining the prize, I found her in great confusion, with so much lumber on deck that the men were employed until dusk stowing it below. The night turned out fine, and when I went to bed, at four o'clock the following morning, the breeze was quite moderate and favourable.

By noon, on the 10th, it was nearly calm. We set up the fore rigging, which was dangerously slack, and did everything in our power to put the vessel in good order. A tolerable observation of the sun's meridian altitude gave latitude 34 deg. 2 min. North, longitude 69 deg. 52 min. West, our run being 98 miles on a S. by E. course. Soon after one o'clock P.M. a light breeze sprung up from S.E. At six o'clock P.M. the wind shifted to S.W.—squally, with heavy rain. It increased rapidly, obliging us, before ten o'clock, to take in all sail, except the reefed foresail, and by midnight it was blowing a gale from S.W. by S.

The weather, on the 11th December, was more moderate till noon, when the wind again increased, with much rain. No observation could be taken for the latitude; but, allowing for the little progress we had made since noon the previous day, Bermuda bore, by my calculation, E. by S. 270 miles distant. At two o'clock P.M. the rain somewhat abated, but the wind still blew excessively hard. Lying-to under the

storm-reefed foresail, we found the schooner as good a sea-boat as we could expect such a small vessel to be in a heavy sea. About four P.M. the gale abated, with very heavy rain. Soon after, I remarked to Paxton there was some appearance of a favourable change of wind, which until now had been steady from S.W. As I expected, before five P.M. it flew round to N.W. by W., and we bore up with a strong breeze and fair weather, the rain having entirely ceased. This afternoon I became very unwell, which I attributed to the American provisions disagreeing with me; but the men were active and cheerful, and everything promised so well for the progress of our voyage, that at six P.M. more sail was set; the moon and stars were out, and we were soon running eight knots, with every appearance of a fine night. These desirable prospects however were of short duration, for before eight o'clock P.M. it grew squally and variable, and by half-past eight the wind had increased so much, with heavy rain, that I went on deck, and, taking the helm myself, sent John Elliott, who had it, to assist the other men in shortening sail.

As it was my turn to keep the middle watch, when the requisite sails were taken in, I went below, telling Paxton to bring the vessel to, if he thought it necessary, as I feared, from appearances, we should have a rough night. After nine o'clock I again went on deck, and found it blowing very strong from N.W., with much sea. I then went below and laid down (my jacket only off) in the starboard bed-place, which was on the weather side, with a light in the cabin, beside the compass lamp in the binnacle. About ten, or not long after, Paxton came down below for something, when he

told me he had brought the schooner to, and that she was doing very well.

I was nearly asleep, and, from what I can recollect, it must have been between half-past ten and eleven o'clock, when I was thrown out of the bed-place with great violence. Both the lights were instantly extinguished, and the water rushed below with such fury that the moment I attempted to rise I was forced backwards into the forepart of the cabin. It will not be matter of surprise, that at first I was so much confused as to be unable to find the companion-ladder to get on deck by. This was afterwards accounted for by the upsetting of the vessel having unshipped the ladder, which at the moment I did not think of. I endeavoured to make Paxton hear me, but in vain; and when, in a very short time, I found the water up to my shoulders, I could only conclude the schooner was fast sinking. I supposed, what afterwards proved to be partly the case, that she had upset, either by some accident or by being struck by a heavy sea, and that the men on deck were washed away. I made several attempts to find the hatch-way doors and get on deck, but the companion was too much under water for me to succeed; and, finding the water suddenly increase up to my chin, I got up into the starboard bed-place, which was now the uppermost part of the vessel, and supported myself on a rail or stanchion fixed perpendicularly (but now horizontal, owing to the change in the vessel's position) between the deck overhead and the locker on the outer side of the bed-cabin; and here, with only my head and neck above water, I remained, expecting every successive moment to seal my doom.

No power of description that the most eloquent tongue has ever been gifted with, could convey anything like an idea of my situation during this night of horror. I appeared literally to be buried alive, the grave closed over my devoted head, and every hope of life fled for ever. Yet, even in this horrible situation, strange as it must appear, I very soon recovered my presence of mind, became perfectly resigned to my fate, and calm to a degree I have never since reflected on without the utmost astonishment. Not one tear fell from my eyes, and I only thought which of my departed relatives I would first meet in that eternity I considered myself as actually entering into. I had happily been blest with the best of parents, whose example and instructions early taught me to place a firm trust in the power and goodness of my Maker ; to which feeling, no doubt, I was indebted for the fortitude by which I was supported in this most awful period of calamity.

I had not been long in the situation I have attempted to describe, when the water increased up to my chin ; but as I was in the highest part of the vessel, there was no further retreat for me. Here therefore I was compelled to remain, and was only preserved from suffocation by the air which found its way through the seams of that side of the schooner which was still above water.

In this situation it is supposed I must have remained about three hours, when I was thrown by a violent motion from the rail I was supporting myself on, and now believed the vessel to be sinking for ever ; but after a fearful struggle—first entirely under water, and afterwards, for three or four minutes,

among bales, boxes, and other various articles—I succeeded in getting to the companion hatch-way. I then found the schooner had righted, and soon as I had recovered my breath, I had little difficulty in getting on deck.

Oh! fatal night of horror and dismay, of suffering and mercy, never to be forgotten. Even now, though many years have since elapsed, the remembrance is too vividly stamped on my imagination ever to be long absent from my thoughts. They only who have escaped from a foundering wreck in the last state of destruction can form even a faint idea of what now presented itself to my agonized view. The scene was sufficient to appal the bravest heart that ever beat in human breast. It was blowing a violent gale, with a very heavy sea; the masts were gone by the board, but still attached to the vessel by the lee rigging; the boat, and every article on deck, except the stove, washed away, and most of the larboard bulwark broken to pieces. The hull was entirely under water, except the starboard bulwark, to which I was obliged to cling to avoid being swept overboard.

The first objects that struck me were two of the men, near the fore-peak or cabin companion. They did not immediately perceive me, and, when one of them (John Brown) did, he was very much frightened, conceiving that he beheld an apparition, so little idea had he or the other man (Paxton) that I could have survived. I now learned from them the cause of our disaster; that the schooner had been struck by a heavy sea, which filled the foresail and upset her, when the three men on deck caught hold of some ropes, and, with much difficulty, lashed themselves to the weather side, near the main rigging;

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that they could not get forward to assist the four men below, owing to the fury of the sea which broke over them. Paxton once made the attempt and was washed from the side, but fortunately became entangled in the rigging and regained the main-chains; that the third man on deck (Christopher Christophinson, a Dane), in about an hour after the vessel was upset, complained of great cold, and said they must all perish very soon, as the officer (meaning myself) and men below had already, and proposed that, as they were only prolonging their sufferings, they should let go from the wreck and submit to their fate.

Paxton bade him keep up his spirits and pray to God—they were yet alive, and, if they survived until daylight, might be saved by some friendly sail passing. He replied he had prayed to God, but that there was no hope or chance for them, and cast off the rope by which he was lashed, immediately after which he was swept from the wreck, and they never saw him more. They assured me the poor fellow's voluntary fate added much to the distress of their already dreadful situation; and now supposing that all the crew except themselves had perished, they determined to cut away the starboard main rigging, which, with much difficulty, they at length accomplished with their pocket-knives. Soon after doing so, both the masts were carried away close by the board, and the vessel righted.

The fate of the poor men in the fore-cabin was no longer doubtful, and our own appeared fast approaching. A frightful sea every few moments broke over our shattered bark, and inevitable death stared us in the face. Had all my little crew

been present, our utmost exertions must then have been utterly unavailing; however, to avoid immediate destruction, by being swept overboard, which we were every moment in danger of, we preferred standing up to our shoulders in water in the cabin to remaining on deck; and, in this terrible situation, half-perished with cold, we spent the remainder of this awful and memorable night.

Daylight on the 12th December found us in the same calamitous position—a hard gale still blowing, almost certain death before us, and not a sail to be seen, from which alone we could hope for preservation. The wreck of the mainmast and other parts were entirely gone, but the foremast was yet fast by its stay to the bowsprit end, and towing ahead of the vessel.

The after-companion was very large, and by extending on the deck farther forward than the bulk-head, which separated the cabin from the hold, formed a sort of recess resembling a low cupboard without doors.

Into this place, which was about two feet high, and barely large enough to contain us, lying as close to each other as possible, we crawled on our knees by the help of a broken board; and here, half-covered I may say at times with water, benumbed with cold, and destitute of even the smallest article of provisions, we spent for hours a wretched existence, without exchanging a word with each other.

On the 13th a gallon jar floated up in the cabin, which I knew had contained brandy, the cork of which was so bad, the liquor was nearly destroyed by salt water. We drank some of it two or three times, but it made us so thirsty I was sure it

would do us more harm than good, and proposed throwing it away, which was soon agreed to, and done accordingly. The American ensign also floated up, and we displayed its stars downwards as a signal of distress, about twelve feet above the deck, on a small spar fixed on one of the pumps, if happily any vessel might pass near enough to see it. But I was well aware we were far outside the usual track of our cruisers on the coast, and at least 270 miles from the nearest land.

I had examined the schooner's papers before our calamity, and by them learned that part of the cargo consisted of Spermaceti oil, in eighty large casks; but it did not occur to any of us until we opened the hold, on the 22nd, that this article saved us from sinking. While the vessel remained full of water, we feared her hull must be so much strained by the weight of the masts (which were very large for her size) when on her beam-ends, that she would eventually open and break up.

On the 14th, still blowing nearly as hard as ever, the wreck of the foremast parted from the bowsprit. We were beginning to suffer much from thirst, and the dread of what we might yet have to undergo added to our misery.

15th December. The storm appeared to be more violent, and, during the night, I repeatedly thought all was over and the wreck going down.

Alas! how unequal to the task of describing the protracted horrors of our awful situation must be the utmost effort of my feeble pen. Now the fourth day without tasting anything but the spoiled brandy—sleepless, and thoroughly wet—and no place of shelter except where we had to lie, with the water actually washing upon and under us; a very slender pro-

tection from the heavy seas that frequently swept over us, threatening a speedy termination of our sufferings, and in constant dread that the shattered wreck might founder from under us. Except by those who have witnessed somewhat similar scenes, the most fertile imagination can but faintly depict what will be far short of the sad reality.

On the 16th the gale was much abated; but the sea was still so high that we attempted, without the least success, to pump the water out. Four or five onions floated up in the cabin, and we eagerly devoured them. The weather had become much warmer, the wind having changed from N.W. to Southerly; but this brought us little relief, for, owing partly to the increased warmth, the water in the vessel was now quite offensive from the corpses of our four drowned shipmates. Brown, too, was very unwell; he had several sores breaking out on his limbs, and though Paxton and myself were not so troubled, yet from such exposure to the weather, with so little clothing on, and incessant soaking in sea water, we exhibited to each other a most wretched and cadaverous appearance.

The 17th proved a fine morning, which somewhat revived our drooping spirits. We soon tried the pump, and, in about half an hour, finding the water decrease, we redoubled our efforts. We were much exhausted, however, and both Brown and myself were frequently obliged to drop on our knees, and pump as long as we were able in that posture. But it was more than we were equal to. We were often forced to desist entirely, and extend ourselves on our backs on the deck, for a quarter of an hour or so, before we could resume our task;

Paxton in the mean time taking our place, or bailing with a bucket found in the cabin. Our success stimulated our exertions, and, after almost incredible toil (considering our weakness), we got nearly all the water out between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, but were hardly able to stand or move for some time, and suffered dreadfully from thirst. Brown soon found a small cask of water in the fore-peak which gave us new life, I may say. Both the men now went below, and after very great difficulty we succeeded in getting up two of the bodies of our unfortunate companions, which were in such a putrid swollen state as only to be recognised by their clothes. It required all my fortitude to get through this most painful scene. My prayer-book was found in the cabin, and after reading part of the burial service, we hove them overboard; but they would not sink, and we had the additional grief of seeing them immediately devoured by ravenous sharks, many of which were constantly about the vessel.

We found in the cabin about a pound of boiled beef, a quantity of salt fish, and a few onions, but neither spirits nor biscuit, of which latter there had been plenty on board. Nevertheless, we were most truly thankful to the Almighty for what he had enabled us to accomplish, as well as for the present assistance He had in so much mercy given us; and though we were wet and cold, we spent this night in comparative comfort to the six preceding ones. Sunday, 18th December, 1814. The fore-peak was so full of lumber and small casks, which had all to be got on deck, that we had a far more arduous task to get up the two remaining bodies than in removing

the two first. They were in a frightful state of decomposition, much bruised, and chiefly held together by their clothes. It was nearly dark before we committed them to the deep, and we were again distressed at beholding them share the fate of the others. On the 19th we commenced our efforts to get a jury-mast and sail up. We had saved, more by accident than otherwise, one small broken spar, a sweep or large oar, a boat-hook staff, and one of the compasses; and we found below a large coil of very strong spun-yarn, some rope, one small sail, the bonnet of the jib, a palm, sail-needles and twine, with other useful articles, including my quadrant, a page of a navigation book with the sun's declination for 1813, a few of my shirts and duck trousers, excepting which, everything else I was possessed of was lost.

We now experienced the value of Paxton's assistance; he was an excellent sailmaker, and without him we could hardly have accomplished anything. After many difficulties, we secured the broken spar as a foremast, on which we set a gaffsail, large enough for a frigate's barge or launch; and by sunset were going about three knots, with a smooth sea and Southerly wind. After a long consultation with Paxton, we resolved to steer towards the American coast. To this I at first greatly objected, but Paxton dreaded the extensive rocks of Bermuda, in some places eighteen and twenty miles from land, as also the strong current from the Westward, which he feared might drift us past the Islands, and expose us to greater horrors; as vessels even in a sea-worthy state, after getting to the Eastward, have often been known to be a long time beating up again. In opposition to this, I urged that the then prevailing North-

West wind made our reaching any part of America almost hopeless, and also the great probability there was of our meeting some of our numerous ships of war or merchant vessels in the vicinity of Bermuda. Paxton however was an experienced seaman, and, under all the circumstances of our situation, I deemed it prudent to yield to his judgement, though it eventually proved my own was the most correct.

As early as the 20th my fears were verified, by the wind changing to N.W. On the 22nd we got the sweep secured as a mainmast, with the bonnet of the jib altered for a sail ; but we could not make it answer well, and it was of little or no use. Being a fine day, we opened the main hatches and searched, but in vain, for some onions, a quantity of which I believed to be on board. We however discovered two casks of beet roots, and though many of them were quite rotten, the remainder proved tolerably good, and were most acceptable, as the little provisions we had, though used with the greatest frugality, were nearly expended. We also found another small cask of water in the fore-peak, of which we resolved to be as careful as possible. This night it blew very hard from N.N.W., and the sweep, which was very weak, was carried away in a heavy squall.

We found the rudder-head split through the centre, as low down as the upper pintle, which was occasioned by the strain of the tiller when the schooner was on her broadside. This gave us constant trouble, and nearly mastered all our contrivance to keep it together. We could not, in consequence, keep the helm a-lee so as to make her lie close to, owing to which she fell off so often that the sea constantly struck us, and,

in the severe weather which we encountered, we were always drenched with salt water. We never found the flint and steel, and, even had we done so, there was nothing on board, after our calamity, sufficiently dry to burn.

On 23rd and 24th December, blowing hard from the N.W. ; on the 25th, the same from S.W., but we were to-day able to set our little sail, which stood very well with two reefs in it. We had found a "Companion to the Altar," belonging to Paxton, and a part of every day was devoted to reading to my fellow-sufferers. This day we did nothing else. The sores on Brown's legs were numerous and bad, and several were breaking out on my limbs. On the 26th it was more moderate, and we got the broken sweep up again, with the sail reduced as a lug ; but it stood as bad, or worse than before, and we made no progress to the Westward, the wind constantly prevailing from N.W. to S.W.

Nothing material happened until the 29th, when our little foremast was carried away in the afternoon. This night it blew unusually hard ; and on the 30th and 31st the gale continued, with a very heavy sea. We were in a truly wretched condition ; and, exhausted by cold, anxiety, and want of sleep, the little hope we had left now nearly abandoned us.

January 1st, 1815. The new year dawned on us with a beautiful, fine day, and moderate but adverse wind. We got our broken foremast up again, and the sail set reduced one reef. We repaired the rudder-head, and pumped a quantity of water out that had been shipped in the night. By Paxton's advice I now put on one of his flannel waistcoats under my shirt. We were never twelve hours at once in dry clothes,

and even then they were more damp than dry. After wearing the flannel I was more comfortable, and did not feel the cold near so much as before.

On the 5th January my advice was taken to steer towards Bermuda. By a rough calculation, which I made every day, and marked in the cabin with a piece of chalk, we had lost ground since the 1st, and had experienced little else but storms from W. and N.W. since the 20th December. We again opened the hold and found some more beet root, which was so bad that a very small portion of it was eatable. We also found some salt beef, and used it instead of the fish, which was now becoming bad, and most likely very injurious to our health.

On the 10th Paxton complained of much pain from a large swelling and sore on his right foot. Brown was in a low debilitated state, and myself little better, though most active of the three.

On the 13th blowing very hard, and compelled by the heavy sea to lie-to as well as we could; our little mast was carried away owing to its weakness. On the 14th blowing a hard gale. About noon we were much alarmed by a frightful sea breaking over us and nearly washing away the companion, which was very large, covering the entire cabin. Another such sea must have swept it overboard and proved our destruction. We did our best to secure it with every piece of spare rope we had; but a great deal of water after this constantly found its way into the cabin owing to the damage done, and rendered our situation still more wretched and miserable.

On the 15th the gale abated, and we once more set our

foresail by lashing together the two best sticks we had left for a mast. On the 16th we opened the hatches a third time, and, after a very long search, found the onions. The inside part of them proved pretty good, and, as our water was getting short, we felt truly grateful for this vegetable, and made use of little else from this day. On the 18th Paxton's foot was in such a swollen, painful state, he could not stand on it, or move without assistance, and I became very uneasy about him; Brown nearly as bad, and getting so indifferent to everything, that he rarely came on deck; yet, with so much to discourage me, I did not despair; and as the Almighty had preserved us so long, I cherished a hope I but rarely expressed, that after so much mercy, amidst our trials, He would ultimately save us from perishing.

Since the 5th, by my reckoning, we had several days made from twenty to twenty-five miles per day of our course, and much rain on the 17th and 18th induced me to hope my calculation was not much out, which on the 18th made Berumda bear East 65 miles distant. It was our custom when the weather was moderate to keep the American flag (the only one on board) flying with the stars downwards as a signal of distress. On the morning of the 20th, when giving it to me to hoist, Paxton asked me to pray for its success, saying at the same time he was in very great pain and unable to move. It was quite calm and the sun just above the horizon, when the sight of a vessel pretty close to us struck me almost senseless with joy.

They and they only who have been in situations similar to ours, can form any idea of what our feelings this moment were.

Falling on my knees, I could only articulate, "A sail! a sail!" for many minutes, when a flood of tears gave me relief; and we thanked God, as sincerely, perhaps, as wretched mortals ever did, for our apparently certain and speedy preservation.

The vessel was a schooner, and not being more than a mile distant, we were convinced must see us, and would come to our assistance as soon as a breeze sprung up, which did about nine A.M.; but after a couple of hours spent in painful suspense, we were nearly distracted to find the stranger was rapidly eaving us to our fate.

What a sad reverse! we could hardly speak to each other when we found ourselves thus abandoned, as it were, to destruction. We lost sight of this vessel early in the afternoon, steering E. by N., and I resolved to keep the same course, if possible. If bound to Bermuda, which I thought probable, the chance that she might heave-to in the night, and so enable us to come up with her, afforded us some consolation; and in our calamitous situation it was very natural for us to cherish even the shadow of hope. It now occurred to us that the dread of our being an American privateer caused the stranger to avoid us, and we therefore determined not to show the ensign again. Paxton was very ill and unable to do anything, so that Brown and myself had to relieve each other to steer the schooner, which we did after dark by a star, having a fine breeze from the Southward which lasted all night.

Daylight on the 21st January again cheered us with the sight of two vessels, a large ship and a schooner, six or seven miles to windward, but after the painful disappointment of yesterday, we hardly dared to anticipate anything favourable.

However, after about an hour spent in unutterable anxiety, we had the heart-felt pleasure of perceiving the schooner was fast approaching us, and in less than another, we most devoutly thanked God for our providential deliverance.

Tears ran down the cheeks of the kind-hearted master of this vessel when he beheld the miserable condition in which he found us. I endeavoured to induce him to take my shattered charge in tow, but he reasonably objected to so doing, being short of provisions and fearing such an incumbrance would delay his making the land, which he expected to do every hour. I was therefore compelled to abandon the ill-fated Postboy at a quarter before noon on Saturday, the 21st of January, 1815, and with Charles Paxton, and John Brown, went on board the Anne, of and bound to Bermuda, from Antigua, William George, master, from whom we received every possible kindness and attention in his power to bestow.

Thus terminated a period of forty days, or nearly six weeks of suffering, the severity of which for a considerable part of the time, has perhaps seldom been surpassed.

Such a degree of fatality seemed to follow us that I cannot avoid relating the events of the three following days. The Islands were not seen on the 21st as expected. On the 22nd and 23rd it blew a hard gale, which compelled the Anne to lie-to. On the 24th, steering East, and running between ten and eleven knots an hour, anxiously looking out for Bermuda, at noon a ship was seen from the mast-head. In less than an hour she was made out to be a frigate, and the master of the Anne was desirous for us to remain below, fearing he might be detained if so many men were observed on board,

I however felt such impatient anxiety to know what ship it was, that I could not be persuaded to leave the deck entirely, and when we came pretty close to her, I felt nearly certain that she was the Pactolus. At half-past two P.M. we ran under her stern, and on hearing "You are past the Island forty miles," in the well-known voice of the truly good and gallant Captain Aylmer, I hastened on deck, and instantly recognised the fine ship to which I belonged. Thus we were, perhaps a second time, saved from much suffering, the Anne being nearly out of provisions, owing to her long passage from Antigua.

Lieutenant (now Commander) Richards, under whom I had kept watch above a year, came on board, although it was blowing strong with so much sea that it was hazardous to lower the frigate's boat. From the master of the Anne he first heard a few words about our calamity; but I had to address him by name and tell him who I was, before he knew me, so greatly attenuated and reduced was my appearance.

It is almost superfluous to add, that my messmates vied with each other in acts of kindness to me, and soon rigged me out from their own chests. Indeed, from every officer on board I met with the most feeling attention, but from none so much as my excellent and deservedly beloved Captain. For his care and solicitude on this and many subsequent occasions, I owe a debt of gratitude and esteem, which it will never be in my power to discharge,

We arrived at Bermuda, on the 25th January, 1815. I had unlimited leave of absence on shore, and it was a month before I recovered my strength. I was in a state of extreme

emaciation from protracted starvation, and my arms and legs were covered with ulcerated boils, from long immersion in salt water. The late Sir William Bolton, then captain of his Majesty's ship Forth, and several other officers of our ships of war, evinced much interest on hearing the account of my almost miraculous preservation and escape.

I have since ascertained that both my companions in misfortune are dead. On our return to England, after the war was over, Paxton was sent to the Naval Hospital at Plymouth, in a very bad state of health, the consequence of his sufferings. He remained there eleven months, and died soon after he left it, at his own home. When the Pactolus was paid off, in September, 1815, Brown went to sea in a trader, and was afterwards drowned. As to myself, there can be but little doubt that what I suffered on this occasion laid the foundation of the severe asthmatic disease with which I have been more or less nearly ever since afflicted, and which, in the last few years, has become so distressing as frequently to make me incapable of the smallest bodily exertion, and has rendered me unable to engage in the more active service of my country.

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